

ESSAYONS

Forward

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Gulf Region Division (Provisional), Iraq - Volume 2, Issue 2

March 31, 2005

**RIE stands down —
Corps' role in restoring Iraqi
Electricity**

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*Commander's
Column*



As we continue the mission following very successful Iraqi elections in January, we've reached another significant milestone in the month of February... Two thousand project starts valued at more than \$5 billion. My sincere thanks to the entire team for your hard work and dedicated service. There is momentum that has developed as we continue to assist the Iraqi people in building a better future for their children.

The month of February was also significant in that we saw the transition of authority (TOA) with four of the major subordinate commands. TOAs included: III Corps with 18th Airborne Corps, 1 Cavalry with 3 Infantry Division, 1st Infantry Division with 42nd Infantry Division, and Task Force Olympia (Stryker) with Task Force Freedom (11th Armored Cavalry Regiment). With all of the transition ongoing, the GRD and its districts have provided much of the continuity during this time of change.

The Iraqi government is also transitioning. With the successful elections of January 30, the Iraqis will next seat the transitional government in March and then work toward the development of a constitution. As the political landscape continues to evolve, reconstruction continues. In an effort to get the good word out, we have benefited from the support of the international and Arabic media with television, radio, and newspaper reporting of reconstruction progress. There is still much work required in this area, but we're moving in the right direction.

The reconstruction effort supports the overall campaign plan, and serves the men and women in uniform as well as the Iraqi people. For the men and women in uniform, the reconstruction effort helps to make a secure environment by offering some of those who would be our enemy an option to pick up a shovel instead of an AK-47. In this way, those involved in the reconstruction effort have directly assisted our fellow service members and for that they will be eternally grateful. For those men and women who have paid the ultimate sacrifice and will not return home with the departing units, we thank you for your service, your dedication to duty, and your professionalism.

We're all involved in a mission of enormous proportion that will ultimately affect the future of free and democratic nations across the world. We have an opportunity to make a huge difference, and we're doing just that. Each of you has an important role in this endeavor, and I thank you for your service.

God Bless you all.

Thomas P. Bostick

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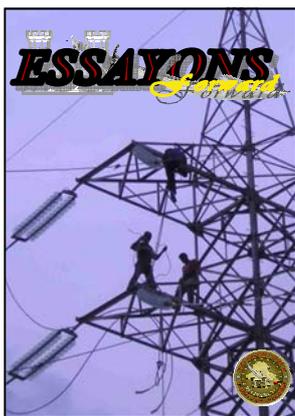
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COVER: Workers install new transmission towers. The improved transmission systems added reliability and redundancy to the Iraqi power grid as part of the RIE effort. (USACE Photo)

New Power in Bayji

As March draws to a close, temperatures in Iraq are on the rise. Getting more electricity on the national grid is of foremost concern as the summer months draw near. An international team of engineers and technical professionals at the Bayji Power Plant have spent the past nine months working to get an additional 270 megawatts of power on the grid. That's enough energy to power over 200,000 Iraqi homes and businesses.

In April 2004, a \$64 million contract was awarded to Odebrecht-Austin, Joint Venture, or OAJV, to rehabilitate gas turbine units 3 and 4, each capable of generating 135 megawatts of power. After months of hard work, units 3 and 4 had first fires this Feb. 25 and March 11, and started applying power to the national grid March 3 and 16, respectively. Final reliability tests are being performed and the project will be transferred to the Ministry of Electricity this month.

OAJV began work at Bayji June 2004. The plant, which is located along the Tigris River, is a central location for oil lines and 400 kilovolt transmission lines that feed electricity to various parts of the country.

"This site is ideal for refurbishing and increasing the reliability of current power generation," said Bob Kennedy, resident engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Kennedy's background in electrical engineering was heavily utilized during the rehab. As the resident engineer, he's provided construction oversight and quality assurance. The project's intent was to restore units 3 and 4 to a level where power could be generated on a reliable basis, he explained.

"The overall objective is to increase power output and capacity through immediate rehabilitation of this plant," Kennedy said. "The project includes the assessment, replacement and rehabilitation of all essential generation components, fuel infrastructure, substations and transmission lines, subordinate equipment, transformers, electrical switchgears and other devices necessary for the production of reliable power for Iraq."

When the contractor arrived on site they found only a shell, Kennedy explained. The turbines were only partially constructed and the plant had been abandoned for four years. Prior to 2000, the Ministry of Electricity had an ongoing contract but it was deserted before the war. Project materials sat unused for several years and some were removed and used elsewhere.

The project has employed as many as 1,100 Iraqis and workers from all around the world have contributed. The project has been an international effort between brave Americans, Brazilians, Canadians, Chileans, Colombians, English, Germans, Indians, Iraqis, Irish, Jordanians, Scots, and Turks, Kenney said. "Together they have all worked as a team, fully committed to Bayji. They turned many obstacles around and overcame daily challenges."

The Bayji area and the pipeline around the plant have been targets for the insurgency, Kennedy explained. When insurgents attacked an oil pipeline near Bayji, a picture Kennedy took of the resulting fire reached the Pentagon several hours later and was used to brief the President of the United States. The oil fire burned through a 400 kilovolt line, which fell into the river, and created a cascading effect, causing 90 percent of the power in the country to trip off line, Kennedy said.

Rehabilitation work was temporarily halted this January when the contractor's convoy was ambushed and the senior project manager was kidnapped. Contract and Corps of Engineers personnel were temporarily removed from the site but returned and started back to work in early February.

"Despite the tragedy and ensuing temporary withdrawal of our forces, we were able to secure our return to the site, along with our subcontractors, shortly after the event," said Paulo Suffredini, executive vice president with OAJV.

"This was in order to complete the project and connect the turbines to the grid. Such an achievement, which wouldn't have been possible without the partnership of the Corps of Engineers' Gulf Region Division, crowned a traumatic yet successful journey that hopefully will end with the safe return home of our colleague.

"We are proud of our contribution to the improved living conditions of so many people, as well as the trust of our client on our ability to deliver in such a harsh environment."

Completion of the contract required expertise in civil, electrical and mechanical engineering, as well as tenacity and lots of hard work. The contractor was able to move around the axiom 'You can't do things quickly in Iraq,' Kennedy said.

"The Odebrecht materials manager could get almost anything from anywhere to this plant in several days," he said. "On several occasions he got replacement electronic modules from Germany in less than 24 hours. The project team constantly adapted to meet the needs of the moment and had a great management team."

Now that the project is complete, Kennedy, who arrived at Bayji in September, is preparing to leave for his next assignment. "This is exactly what I was looking to do to help the Iraqi people," he said. "When I get home after my 13 month tour, I will go home knowing I have done something useful for mankind and my Iraqi friends. This was truly an experience of a lifetime."

Since the Restore Iraqi Electricity mission began in late 2003, over 1,900 megawatts of power have been added to the national grid, enough to service 5.4 million Iraqi homes. Over 1,400 electrical towers and 8,600 kilometers of transmission lines have been installed and over \$4 billion have been allocated from the U.S. supplemental to address the electrical system improvements.

The successful rehabilitation of units 3 and 4 has added an additional 10 percent to the Iraqi grid, Suffredini said.

"The project will provide for substantial easing of living conditions for the Iraqi people," he said. "We are proud of what we have accomplished here."

Nicole Dalrymple

Watermark: The successful rehabilitation of units 3 and 4 at the Bayji Power Plant has placed an additional 270 megawatts on the Iraqi power grid. That's enough energy to power over 200,000 homes and businesses. "We are proud of our contribution to the improved living conditions of so many people," said Paulo Suffredini, executive vice president of Odebrecht-Austin, Joint Venture, the project's prime contractor. (Left) In addition to rehabilitating units 3 and 4 at the Bayji Power Plant, other work was required because the plant had sat abandoned for four years. When the contractor arrived on site, they found but a shell, said Bob Kennedy, resident engineer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. (Photos by Harry Weddington)



Restoring Iraqi Electricity

Directorate stands down — Corps work continues

Nearly 18 months of dedicated effort to add electrical capacity to the Iraq power grid came to a symbolic end as the last new generation project developed under the Restore Iraqi Electricity (RIE) Directorate was handed over to the Iraqi people.

A 270 megawatt (MW) generator project in Baiji, Iraq (see related article, page 3) was officially released to the Iraqi Ministry of Electricity (MoE) in March. Although not the final project in the on-going effort to consistently improve the quality of life for the liberated country, it was the swan song for one of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers most highly celebrated, and significant, contributions to the reconstruction effort.

“What has to be remembered is RIE was developed for an emergency construction effort,” said Lt. Col. Jeffrey Ogden, who has served as the Director for RIE since last summer. “RIE was one of several executing agencies (including U.S. Agency for International Development and MoE) placing megawatts on the grid as the first surgical effort into Iraq to restore the essential service of electricity.”

DEDICATED EFFORT

Shortly after the liberation of Iraq, military planners met with Iraqi Ministry of Electricity members to identify the needs and requirements to get the dilapidated Iraqi power infrastructure to a level to support the country. Pre-war, the system reached a peak output of 4,400 MW, which fell short of the estimated 6,200 MW demand by Saddam and his military.

Following the war, due to looting, vandalism and further damage, the system output dropped to 3,200 MW on average. While the young Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) balanced the electrical need with other reconstruction demands across the country, the intense heat of the Iraqi summer mandated a dedicated effort was necessary to drastically improve the national capacity of the Iraqi power grid.

Following the success of its Task Force Restore Iraqi Oil mission, the CPA turned to the Corps who called upon Brig. Gen. Steven Hawkins to form the new Task Force Restore Iraqi Electricity (TF RIE).

By September 2003, the new TF RIE was on the ground in Iraq, comprised of eighty engineers and specialists from around the Corps, to pursue more than 40 separate new and rehabilitation generation, transmission, distribution and control system projects.

HIGH HANGING FRUIT

According to Col. Todd Semonite, deputy commander of the initial TF RIE team who now serves as director in the Office of the Chief of Engineers in the Pentagon, the mission of RIE was not the small scale quick fixes. RIE’s focus was the large, strategic level needs for the Iraqi people. “RIE was always designed as strategic emergency force,” said Semonite. “We were charged with the heavy lifts, the high hanging fruit, that were above and beyond the capabilities of the Ministry of Electricity to perform.”

The RIE mission was to quickly set the foundation for other CPA reconstruction projects and Ministry projects to build upon. New and rehabilitated generation, improved and protected transmission systems, switching and control facilities, and other larger scale efforts that were not organic to the capabilities of local military line units and Iraqi Ministry of Electricity assets.

For example, one of the task forces early suc-

Left: RIE projects included construction and replacement of hundreds of transmission towers and more than 8400 kilometers of transmission lines. (GRD Photo)

Watermark: RIE work at the Haditha Dam to replace and restore two turbines and add connectivity to the rest of the Iraqi power grid allowed this hydropower dam to operate at full capacity for the first time since 1990. (Photo by Thomas O’Hara)



cesses was the construction of a 400 kV transmission line from Baghdad to Basrah, which had been down for more than a decade. Two hundred ninety three new towers and 2,100 kilometers of transmission lines later, through some of the most challenging environments both geological and hostile, this essential level of connectivity was made possible by the combined effort of CPA and the Corps. “The only way that line came in, and many in the power sector from around the globe didn’t think it was possible, was because of the heavy hand of the Corps,” said Semonite, who was nicknamed “Father Midnight” by the Iraqi security teams hired to protect the electrical infrastructure.

Despite unquestionable success, the celebration of these achievements has been mostly missed in the global reporting of reconstruction efforts in Iraq. While national capacity continues to grow and age-old systems are replaced or restored, much of the international news dialogue remains focused on crude analysis of day-to-day levels realized in emerging markets and poor Iraqi towns. They often ignore the complicated factors that combine to the overall infrastructure picture.

To those in the RIE program, part of the inaccurate reporting comes from 1) a lack of understanding of the magnitude of the effort, 2) the combination of new system capacity chasing an ever increasing demand line as Iraqi markets and industry grow, and 3) the need to keep RIE’s initial successes a secret. “That’s on me,” said Brig. Gen. Stephen Hawkins who was the first commander for the task force, who is now retired and living in Georgia.

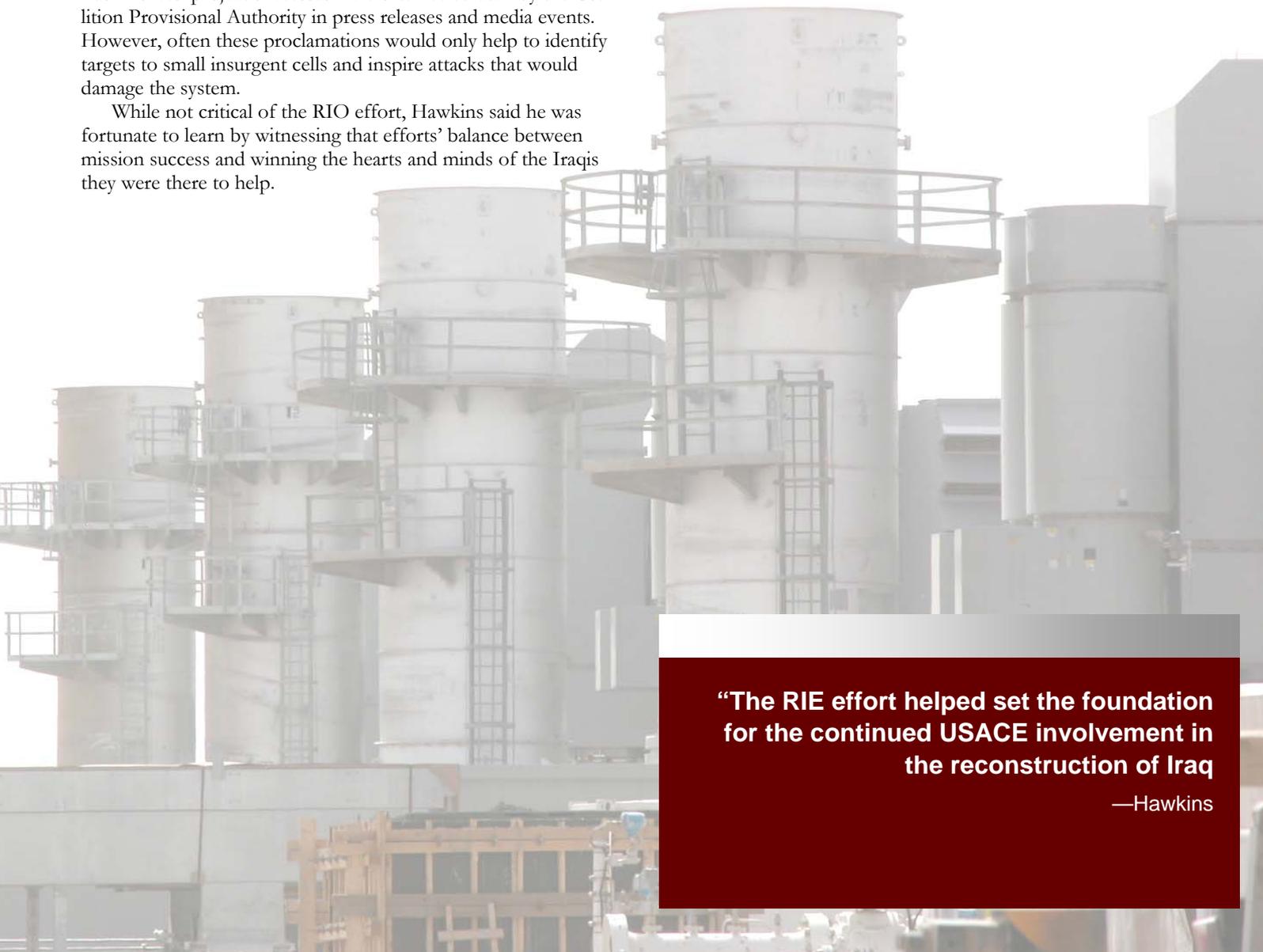
In fall 2004, in an effort to illustrate to the Iraqi people the improving nature of their oil infrastructure, the Restore Iraqi Oil Task Forces’ project successes were often celebrated by the Coalition Provisional Authority in press releases and media events. However, often these proclamations would only help to identify targets to small insurgent cells and inspire attacks that would damage the system.

While not critical of the RIO effort, Hawkins said he was fortunate to learn by witnessing that efforts’ balance between mission success and winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqis they were there to help.



Brig. Gen. Steven Hawkins, now retired, (right) inspects an early RIE project in the fall of 2003. (GRD photo)

Below: New generation projects such as the Qudas power plant in northern Baghdad combined to add more than 2000 MW to the Iraqi power grids — nearly a 70 percent increase from postwar levels. (Photo by Thomas O’Hara)



“The RIE effort helped set the foundation for the continued USACE involvement in the reconstruction of Iraq

—Hawkins

“I saw what was happening to the RIO folks,” said Hawkins. “I put a clamp down on the news reporting since I figured it was more important to get the projects up quickly and safely (for our personnel),” said Hawkins.

Hawkins decision would be validated as the task force was able to quickly and quietly rack up success after success in the fall of 2004.

- Nearly 1000 MW of generation was added by the end of 2004.
- Internet connectivity at eight command and control nodes provided real-time reporting for the first time for these national systems.
- More than 335 transmission towers and several thousand kilometers of line were installed by January 2004.
- Fifteen hundred Iraqi Power Police were hired to protect and secure the replaced systems.
- And so much more...

FROM TASK FORCE TO DIRECTORATE

In January 2004, Corps operations in Iraq were assembled under one unified command, the Gulf Region Division, and the components of TF RIE reorganized as a directorate under the divisional command. While the names of the players changed, the dedication and drive of those working under the RIE effort was unbending.

Much of the success for the RIE projects was the dedication of the personnel living and working at the project sites. While insurgent efforts to attack infrastructure deterred and delayed many reconstruction efforts, the RIE strategy to minimize exposure and maximize project time by housing personnel in work camps on site had a direct relationship in achieving the success within the program.

In the end, the combined TF RIE and RIE Directorate effort would involve nearly \$1.5 billion in projects, replacing and restoring more than 8,400 km of transmission line, several hundred transmission towers, new and improved substations and switching facilities and adding 2,083 MW to the capacity of the Iraqi grid – nearly a 70 percent increase from post-war levels. Entirely new generation projects like that in Qudas,

Brig. Gen. Thomas Bostick, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division, inspects a Baghdad power plant in August. The plant is one of several the Corps and the Multinational Force have rebuilt since the fall of the former regime in 2003.

(Photo by Mitch Frazier)



north of Baghdad, would stand alongside restoration efforts like the Haditha Dam, which reached full capacity for the first time in a decade last summer.

“Without a doubt, the RIE program should rank as one of the Corps’ greatest achievements – right along with the construction of the Washington Monument and the Panama Canal,” said Douglas Plachy, from Savannah District, who served as the senior program manager for RIE from March through July 2004.

LEGACY

While the projects identified under the RIE directorate have now all been completed, the Corps role in the continuing improvement of the infrastructure will continue. Much like its ongoing contract and project support to the improving oil infrastructure following the RIO stand down last summer, members of the Gulf Region Division will continue to work with local sectors on smaller scale projects to bring additional improvements to life throughout Iraq.

Together, the Corps will continue to work with the MoE to reach their strategic goal of providing full capacity and local connectivity to the country in the coming years.

“The RIE effort helped set the foundation for the continued USACE involvement in the reconstruction of Iraq,” said Hawkins.

RIE’s success can be attributed to the dedicated work ethic by the entire team, said Semonite. “Every single person -- the contracting person, the quality assurance person on the ground, the PAO, or the major who was the S-3 -- it was a team effort that made this possible. There was no way any of this could have been pulled this off without everyone working together.”

“RIE is a perfect example of just how good the Corps really is,” said Lt. Col. David Press, who served as Director for the RIE Directorate in the spring of 2004. “Members of the Corps volunteered from around the world, to take on an extraordinary challenge to overcome all obstacles to accomplish the mission. The Corps is better for it and more importantly, so are the Iraqi people.”

Thomas O’Hara

Below: Iraqi Interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi thanks the efforts of the Corps in the rebuilding of the country’s infrastructure as Dr. Aiham Alsammarae, minister of electricity shakes hand with then GRD Commander, Maj. Gen. Ronald Johnson at a ribbon cutting ceremony at Qudas, in Baghdad, June 26, 2004.

Watermark: New construction at Qudas. (Photos by Thomas O’Hara)



Kerbala contractors conference

A player must know the rules of the game before being able to play well. Conversely, a manager cannot build and guide a successful team if potential, capable players are unaware of the team's requirements.

These guidelines are appropriate for the sports world as well as for local Iraqi contractors who want to bid for contracts with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Southern District (GRS).

The GRS oversees Iraqi reconstruction efforts in the Basrah, Tallil, and Hillah areas of operation. In order to stimulate the economy throughout their area of responsibility, GRS employees constantly seek qualified, capable, local Iraqi firms to which they can award construction contracts relating to the rebuilding of Iraq.

Since many Iraqi contractors are unaware of how to bid for a GRS contract, the GRS frequently hosts Contractors' Conferences to acquaint the contracting public with their requirements. The GRS recently conducted its latest conference in the city of Kerbala.

"The biggest benefit of contractor conferences is that they allow us to identify Iraqi contractors of various sizes and capabilities. In addition, they keep the local and regional employment benefits of our reconstruction efforts more equi-



Democracy catches on—Iraqi contractors feel free to ask open and challenging questions.

table across the country," said Col. Roger A. Gerber, GRS District Engineer.

Wes Watson, GRS Hillah Area Engineer, cited additional benefits gained from holding the conferences.

"These conferences not only provide a starting point for contractors regarding training in the bidding process, but they also serve to provide the initial list of contractors to whom we send Requests for Proposals," said Watson. "As a result of previously held conferences, we have increased, from zero to 250, the number of contractors from which we can draw."

Various GRS employees, including Gerber and Watson, addressed the audi-

ence of 60 participants and focused on upcoming bidding requirements for the new Kerbala police station.

The GRS speakers stressed that there is a process in place for bidding on the contracts, that the process of getting a contract awarded is fair, and that it is important for contractors to provide all requested information when they respond to a Request for Proposal.

According to Watson, once GRS awards a contract, the contractor will receive additional quality control requirements training at a pre-construction meeting.

Denise Calabria



An Iraqi contractor raises an issue to the panel.
(Photos by Denise Calabria)



Preparing for a different firefight

Fire fighters in Baghdad rush to their stations during a mock fire drill at Baghdad International Airport.

(U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Photo)

Iraq's fire fighters are better off today than they were under the regime of Saddam Hussein—when fire service was largely ignored. Because fire fighters received little or no training, they merely contained fires. When called on to fight fires, they lacked the basic equipment their stateside brothers take for granted. Fireproof gear, hardhats, oxygen tanks and mask, even an ax were rare or nonexistent.

According to Bruce Edwards, a firefighter trainer with Skylink, “Originally, firefighters during Saddam’s time were given all the odd jobs. Whatever anyone didn’t want to do, they got the firemen to do it.”

Skylink has instilled a lot of pride in these people and is training them extensively to operating as a qualified fire department.

“Now, they say, ‘No. We are professionals. We will not do the odd jobs.’ They’re here to save lives and property,” Edwards said.

During Sadam’s regime, firefighters would rush to a burning building in basic street clothing – shoes optional - only to face Saddam’s soldiers waiting outside the blaze.

“If they refused to enter a structure or ran back out they would be greeted by a bullet,” Edwards explained.

Baghdad is underserved by fire stations and the services they provide. Thanks to Iraqi Ministry of Interior and Coalition Forces, Baghdad will benefit from 35 new or rehabilitated fire stations that will accommodate approximately 25 fire fighters and 11 daytime administrative staff members.

“Not only are fire stations being refurbished, the fire fighters are taking extremely good care of them. They’re proud of their buildings and proud of their work. The stations and the fire fighters will allow for a safer Iraqi society,” Edwards said.

Alicia Embrey

Building better border forts

The Iraqi people value their own newfound liberty and are determined to write their own history. For these reasons, Iraqis are constructing border forts all along their country's borders and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is actively monitoring the situation to help prepare a more capable and formidable Iraqi security force.

According to John Crabbe, USACE-Gulf Region South project engineer, the firm Parsons, Inc., won the Iraqi border fort contract. Parsons, in turn, hires local Iraqis to perform construction work at the sites, while USACE provides contract and construction oversight and quality assurance reviews.

Crabbe is quick to explain the significant, positive role that border forts play in the country's immediate future.

"These border forts are critical because of Iraq's security situation. We have got to improve their ability to keep enemies of Iraq out of the country," said Crabbe.

The Iraqi construction crews perform their tasks with makeshift tools and a scarcity of typical, everyday building supplies such as wood. Yet, they continue to provide a quality final product.

"All of the Iraqi sub-contractors with whom I have come in contact had a great desire to improve the security and overall situation of their country. It was a pleasure to deal with each of them," said Crabbe.

Throughout the southern region of Iraq, 47 border fort contracts were awarded, of which 46 are already in progress.

Perhaps it is Iraqi "pride in ownership" – a concept long denied them – that spurs them on. Perhaps they find their motivation through the incentive of a much-needed paycheck.

Whatever the construction workers' incentive may be, they can take pride in their individual contributions. The construction of border forts is just one more positive step along Iraq's path to a democracy that represents its people, enables peaceful relations with its neighbors, and ensures its ability to defend itself.

Denise Calabria

Watermark: Local Iraqi crews construct one of the 46 border forts springing up through the southern region of the country.

(Photos by Denise Calabria)



Right: John Crabbe, USACE-GRS project engineer (left), demonstrates to Col. Walter B. Chahanovich, USACE-GRD, the local method for laying a course of bricks. Due to a shortage of wood, the Iraqis ensure temperature and sound insulation in their construction by alternating additional masonry.

Changes sweep across

The winds of change are sweeping across Iraq and affecting everything in their path. Local Iraqi police forces and police stations are no exception; they are undergoing both procedural and physical adjustments through the combined guidance of coalition members from Italy and the United States.

The Italian Army and Italian Carabinieri (Military Police) are responsible for performing patrols, providing security, training local Iraqi police officers, and equipping them with weapons and law enforcement systems in the local southern province of Dhi Qar.

The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has responsibility for overseeing the physical reconstruction of Iraq. The USACE Gulf Region South is responsible for reconstruction efforts in the Basrah, Tallil, and Hillah areas of operation.

Part of GRS' mission is to provide quality facilities for basic security services, to include local police stations. In order to complete required renovations in the region, USACE assesses the sites under security provided by the Carabinieri, develops courses of action, and initiates construction contracts. The contractors always use local Iraqi laborers to perform the required construction work.

To date, GRS has been tasked with approximately 275 stations for renovations – 181 of which have been assessed. The Multinational Security Transition Command-Iraq identified the requirements from input from maneuver commands, e.g., Multinational Division-Southeast. In the region, 135 contracts have been awarded and over 100 sites have begun construction.

Members of a local police force are anxious to share their opinions and have an encouraging reaction to the changes taking place around them. For example, 1st Lieutenant Haider, of the Nasiriyah Police Department Serious Crimes Unit, has served on the police force for 12 years. When asked about changes he has seen throughout his career, he responded quickly.

“The situation has changed now to be better than in the past,” says Haider. “Our salaries have increased. The Iraqi people are more cooperative now. Even though there is still some danger, we are more ready to work in a good way.”

One of the changes Haider's unit experienced is the result of training provided by the Italian Carabinieri.

“The Italians are very cooperative. They provided us with police training and a new way to register criminals with a new computer system and equipment,” said Haider.

When asked if the Iraqi public accepts the changes in their police departments, Haider gave a supportive response. “There is now a cooperation and respect from the two sides. People now think the police work for their sake due to a thorough change in the way the police perform. They are working closer with the people,” said Haider.

Bob Hanacek, resident engineer (left) and Rick Mers, construction representative, USACE GRS, take measurements and notes during a recent assessment visit at Nasiriyah police station.

(Photos by Denise Calabria)



Assess local Iraqi police stations

Haider hopes to see many improvements to his workplace. “We would like to see the station totally refurbished with towers, an internal garage, and outside guard rooms,” he said.

According to Mark Bennett, USACE Construction Manager, Haider and his police unit will eventually see those improvements and more. Bennett says, in order to ensure the protection and safety of each police force staff, police station requirements include security walls, guard towers, generator installation, exterior lighting, bullet-proof glass, bars on exterior windows, steel exterior doors, and an antenna. In order to make the stations habitable for employees, toilets, plumbing and electricity will also be included in all USACE total renovations of facilities.

In some cases, says Bennett, renovations instead of rebuilding will ensure that existing police stations – some 50, 60, or 70 years old and lacking healthy maintenance over the years – are brought to an acceptable standard. That standard includes the required security features.

Whether the issue is renovating existing stations, or identifying those locations that warrant newly built stations, substantial efforts are in place to help Iraq prepare more capable and formidable security forces. It is through these carefully coordinated efforts that the Iraqi people will be able to assume responsibility for their own security.

Denise Calabria



First Lt. Haider (right), Nasiriyah Police Department Serious Crimes Unit, points out the police station’s rundown condition to Mark Bennett, USACE construction manager.

Mark Bennett, USACE GRS (left), and Italian Army Maj. Giuseppe Pugliese, Security Sector



Al Thawra, or Sadr City, is under construction.

Through coalition reconstruction partnering, work is already underway to rebuild Sadr City's utilities, facilities and a new quality of life for its two million residents.

According to Ken Larson, resident engineer for the multi-million dollar undertaking, the projects include water and electrical distribution to homes and businesses, sewage collection, four fire stations, nine outpatient health clinics and a refurbished, upgraded hospital, for starters.

"The Ibn Al-Baladi hospital is a \$17M upgrade to the existing facility which began last July. It will be a full service hospital and we hope the doors will be open by this October.

"With a city of two million people, Sadr City needs 8-10 hospitals," Larson said, a need that will be helped some with nine new outpatient health clinics between Sadr City and the city of Nine Nisan.

"All of the health clinics are new outpatient treatment facilities with x-ray capabilities," he added. "Seven of the nine are well underway, with work beginning on them last October. Our target completion date is this August for most of them."

Each of the clinics is an estimated \$534K, with the Al-Thubbatt facility slightly larger to accommodate configuration as a teaching facility.

Electricity

But hospitals and health clinics need reliable electricity, for which the pre-work started over a year ago, and several contracts are close to starting. At a cost of \$121M, the main power distribution grid contract—including a critical network for backup capability and servicing most of the city's 84 sectors—has a target completion date of mid-September '06, according to Larson. This includes purchase and delivery of materials to the area with Ministry of Electricity supervision of actual installation.

Larson explained that the recently completed Al-Ameen major substation will distribute electricity to smaller substations, which in turn, will serve residents' homes and businesses.

"We're just signing the initial contract now for materials-purchase only for service to approximately 70K homes," Larson said, explaining that the Iraqi Minister of Electricity then takes responsibility for installation of the materials by Iraqi local workers in their own neighborhoods. When a given sector's materials are in place, utility cables are in the ground, and all other requirements are met, more materials for additional sectors will be released for more of the city's 84 sectors.

"A critical item requirement on all of these contracts is the mandate to employ the Iraqi workforce," Larson said. "The prime contractor for the main electrical

materials supply project is American, with a Turkish sub-contractor who employees on-site, local Iraqi citizens," he added.

"This project employees approximately 100-150 Iraqi citizens per sector," according to Jim Waddell, resource management officer for the Sadr City reconstruction project.

"The Minister of Electricity hires workers in different communities within the city, but we estimate the entire electricity project will ultimately employ about 2,000 Iraqi workers," Waddell said.

Sewage, Water and Fire

Although the days of raw, untreated sewage flowing into the Dyala and Tigris rivers are numbered, there is still disappointment on the faces of many of Sadr City residents.

A student at the Technological University and a resident of the city's Orfeli district, Talib Hashim, 21, sees a disparity.

"Yes, there is change, but it's so little," Hashim said. "Some roads are being serviced with asphalt, but the sewage and electricity are lagging behind." Hashim feels there is a large contrast between published dollar figures for those two projects and actual tangible results.

Several preliminary clean and/or repair contracts for sewage distribution lines were awarded last summer and Fall to clean main lines and repair collapsed lines that carry sewage away from the city to proper treatment facilities to the Southeast at Rustamiyah Sewage Treatment Plants. These lines were desperately in need of cleaning or repair, as were the two main treatment plants that were taken out over 14 years ago during the first Gulf War.

"Three of these repair/cleaning contracts were awarded to (local Iraqi contractor) Ghadak Limited, last Fall, who has been cleaning the trunk lines, although intermittently, due to interruptions of various causes," Larson said.

"But, we hope the cleaning portion of these three projects will be completed by the end of this month, when we can move on. There are several other sewage infrastructure projects ongoing that we are monitoring also. Earlier this year we began projects for laying sewage line connections to about 17,000 homes in the Oubaidi and Kamliya areas."

The \$3.5M Al-Amari water-treatment plant in Nine Nisan is almost complete, according to Larson. Although relatively small, it still offers the sorely-needed capacity to service about 25K people.

As a resident of the Habibya District of Sadr City, Hamid Ali is anxious for the reconstruction completion.

"We have not yet seen any change, especially with electricity. And, the sewer pipes appear to be small and installed in a haphazard pattern; going here or there, but not in a continuous network."

Four fire stations are also underway, with Parson's Contracting for design build. Parson's also has the contract for Sadr City's nine new health clinics and

hospital mentioned above.

Schools

These 30-day, fast paced face-lift contracts are designed to get teachers and students back into the classroom, Larson said, and they're awarded to local Iraqi contractors.

"We wrote school Blanket Purchase Agreements for small contracts based on the school-mistress' priority list and input. We only had the funds this past December and January to touch about 30 of 100 schools, and we're waiting for more money to do the same for the city's other 60 or 70 schools."

A mere \$4M will provide approximately 30 of Sadr City's schools with electricity, heat, water, doors and windows with glass, functioning bathrooms and furniture for both students and faculty.

"Just the basics ran about \$130K per school, but we hope to get some more money from somewhere," Larson said.

He doesn't foresee setbacks or obstacles for the Sadr City reconstruction project and feels all scheduled dates of completion are within reach as long as delivery of materials and installation stays on schedule. If relative peace continues, major inroads on providing sewer, water and power infrastructure to the country will continue.

"There's not much supply resource in Iraq yet," Larson said, "so most project materials come from Turkey and elsewhere. The only exception is that Iraq can provide mud and clay for brick and block materials needed."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will oversee and/or monitor the Sadr City reconstruction until the project's completion.

LuAnn Fantasia, GRD

Ramadi barrage will get needed repairs

Barrages in Iraq are of critical national importance and key infrastructure significance for its people. The Ramadi Barrage, on the Euphrates River, is part of a sensitive system designed for flood control and irrigation storage that consists of the Warrar Inlet Canal structure, Al Duban Regulator and the Habbaniyah Reservoir.

During the 1991 Gulf War, seven of the barrage's gates were damaged by air-to-ground missiles. The damaged gates were left in the down position resulting in a loss of performance, particularly during floodwater periods.

"Currently, there are 17 operable gates that cannot handle the flood releases from Haditha Dam," said Brian Anderson, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project engineer. "The barrage also has an inoperable navigation lock and an operating fish ladder.

"Since there are seven closed inoperable gates, the structure is not performing as it was designed. To add to the problem

the hydraulic characteristics around the barrage have changed, which could cause sedimentation at the inoperable gates. So, it's necessary to repair the gates to decrease upstream flooding," Anderson said.

The Iraqi Ministry of Irrigation and Dams spent the last dozen years repairing the structure. The restoration work on the seven bays was nearly complete when the 2003 war halted installation of the hoisting equipment.

"Inspection revealed that the gates are well lubricated and cared for other than paint for corrosion protection. However, even though the 17 operable gates are greased and operate smoothly, there are other maintenance issues which have been neglected over the past 15 year," Anderson explained.

"The \$3M repair work is scheduled to begin mid-April or May, pending SPCO approval and contractor selection, with a completion date of mid-April 2006," Anderson said. "Repairing the barrage will provide jobs for the Iraqi people and ensure that it will operate properly for its designed purposes, which are irrigation and flood control," Anderson said.

Alicia Embrey, GRC

Maysan Province soon to get 13 renovated police stations

Numerous organizations have combined efforts with the Iraqi people in the goal of rebuilding of Iraq. Due to efforts by several military and civilian groups, improvements are underway to lower the crime rate in Maysan Province, to provide increased security to the police forces in the region, and to stimulate local economies.

Once the Basrah firm, Mott McDonald, completed its assessments of 13 police stations throughout Maysan Province, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region South (GRS) awarded contracts to local Iraqi construction firms to implement the planned renovation reconstruction. These 13 stations represent only the beginning of the program as additional stations undergo assessments in the future.

The Corps sought various input in order to choose local contractors for the assignments. Sources included word of mouth, Iraqi engineers' recommendations, and names submitted at previous contractors' conferences hosted by the GRS. Once compiled, the recommendations provided a pool of contractors from either within Maysan or nearby provinces from which the Corps could make its selections.

The Welsh Royal Regiment, under the direction of Lt. Col. Ben Bathurst, contributed to the effort by supplying valuable local information based upon its many contacts, as well as providing security to Corps employees so they could conduct site assessments.

Renovations for the 13 police stations

in Maysan Province compare to those taking place throughout Central and Northern Iraq. That is because, in the past, the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I) and the Multi-National Division-SE agreed upon a set of standard requirements for all police stations.

"As a result, Maysan Province renovation reconstruction will include guard towers, security walls, generator installation, exterior lighting, bullet-proof glass, bars on exterior windows, steel exterior doors, and an antenna," said Ken Derickson, GRS MNSTC-I Construction Manager.

Electricity, plumbing, and toilets will also be included in all USACE facility renovations.

"These improvements will serve to improve the morale of the police so they will do a better job – thereby improving the local security situation," Derickson added.

Based upon the size of each station and the renovations required, individual station reconstruction costs will range from \$65,000 to \$180,000.

Renovations to the initial 13 stations will directly improve the security and working conditions for approximately 1500 police in Maysan Province. However, the construction upgrades will serve to have a ripple effect, thereby delivering benefits that extend far beyond the police station walls.

"Approximately 800-1200 Iraqis will be put to work in conjunction with the renovation program," said Derickson, "thereby stimulating the local economies throughout Maysan Province."

The various organizations involved in these projects will be able to see the fruits of their labors as these renovations and related benefits take place in the very near future. According to Derickson, all of the initial 13 renovation contracts are 90 days in length, thereby ensuring the work will conclude by the end of May.

Denise Calabria, GRS

Al Ameen sewage system removes health hazard, improve sanitation

Al Ameen District, east of Baghdad, is a modest residential community with small mom and pop businesses. Among the brick and rubble, scattered remnants of the homes that stood there are still visible. As the reconstruction effort drives forward the free Iraqis in this area reach out for basic necessities. Clean water to drink, 24-hour electricity to heat, cool, cook with and light their homes; and just as important a sewage system to prevent the stench and health hazards threatening their families.

Today the \$2.7 million sewage and wastewater project at Al Ameen stands as a shining example to the rest of Iraq. The new system replaces open slit

trenches, malfunctioning lagoons, alleviates general pooling in the neighborhoods and provides an operable sanitary sewage system to transport sanitary wastes from the neighborhood.

Focus for Iraqi Contractors, the 20th Engineer Battalion, and the Corps of Engineers now turn to the unpaved streets. Even under the former regime, it was not uncommon to see standing water in the streets, even on the hottest, driest days. "They have never had a proper sewage system or paved streets," Travis Lynch, a Corps project engineer explained.

The roads, where children play, soaked with raw sewage, sewage sludge, and storm water trenches that twist through the communities like Kamaliya are now a fading memory for the residents of Al Ameen.

"During my first visit to the area, I was surprised at the dilapidated conditions that the people of Al Ameen live in," Lynch said. "There is now marked improvement in the area. The road ways are clearly defined with the installation of curbs, and the sewer lines have eliminated the pooling sewer water on the street. Curb lined streets nearly ready for asphalt has replaced sewage flooded dirt roads."

With the system now in place it's important to pave the roads and protect the sewage lines. "The existing dirt roads were in bad shape and in need of repair. "The Iraqi contractor has cleaned the trash and sewage from roads, removed damage pavement material and curb, and replaced them with suitable sub-grade and base-course. The contractor will soon begin placing new pavement," said Mike Mitchell, project engineer.

The pavement not only acts as a good driving surface, it provides protection to the lines from the adverse affects of weather, vehicle traffic and erosion. "The curb acts as a limit to the roadway width keeping traffic within its boundaries," Mitchell said. "It also acts as a storm water collection system funneling rainwater into collection points which then feed into the sewer system and out of the streets."

Thanks to the new sewage system and cleanup effort performed by Al Ameen citizens, pending health issues are also fading.

"Diseases stemming from sewage collecting in inhabited areas are responsible for a large percentage of death and birth defects in the population. Mosquitoes also breed in these ponds and act as carriers of disease. Without the sewage system project, the spread of disease could have reached epidemic proportions," Mitchell said.

"The 20th Engineer Battalion worked extensively with USACE, the Iraqi Government and local residents in making this project a successful reality," Mitchell added.

Alicia Embrey, GRC

Synergy in security

The dictionary defines ‘synergy’ as cooperative interaction among groups that creates an enhanced, combined effect larger than the sum of its parts.

One can say the cooperative relationship between the Italian Army and Carabinieri (Federal Police), and the United States Army Corps of Engineers assigned to southern Iraq – and their ultimate impact upon Iraqi police forces -- is an example of synergy in security.

As members of the Multi-National Coalition-Iraq, the Italian Army and Carabinieri are responsible for performing patrols, providing security, training local Iraqi police officers, and equipping them with weapons and law enforcement systems.

“In Dhi Qar province, the Italian Joint Task Force has one of its main tasks [in the reconstruction of Iraq] in training the military and police forces to include participating in the reconstruction and renovations of the Security and Justice Facilities of the province,” said Italian Army Major Giuseppe Pugliese, Security Sector Reform (SSR) Department Officer. “Humanitarian aid distribution is our secondary responsibility.”

Carabinieri Lt. Col. Angelo DeQuarto, Chief, Maneuver Unit, Regiment Multinational Specialized Unit, has been actively involved in the set up of computer systems for local Iraqi police, thereby providing them a new way to register criminals. DeQuarto said the system is similar to the one he uses when he performs typical criminal investigations in his native Sicily.

The USACE Gulf Region Division is responsible for overseeing much of the physical reconstruction of Iraq. The Gulf Region Southern District (GRS), located near Camp Mithica where Pugliese and De Quarto are assigned, oversees the Corps’ reconstruction efforts taking place in the Basrah, Tallil, and Hillah areas of operation.

Part of the GRS mission is to provide quality facilities for basic Iraqi security services, including local police stations. In order to complete necessary renovations or new construction in the uncertain Iraqi environment, the Corps performs site assessments under security provided by the Carabinieri. Once they complete their assessments, Corps employees develop courses of action and initiate construction contracts. In an effort to stimulate the local economy and make the Iraqi people shareholders in the rebuilding of their country, the contractors almost always use local Iraqi laborers to perform the required construction work, as well as laborers verified by the Italian forces.

Recently, DeQuarto’s unit escorted a Corps engineering team to the Nasiriyah Serious Crimes Unit and Organized Crime Unit stations. While the Italians had already implemented police training and computerized improvements for these units, the Corps’ focus was on physical renovations for the stations.

As a result of the assessment, Mark Bennett, a Corps con-

struction manager, recommended improvements to include guard towers, an internal garage, outside guardrooms, security walls, a power generator, exterior lighting, bulletproof glass, bars on exterior windows, steel exterior doors, and an antenna. In order to make the stations habitable for the police, Bennett also included toilets, plumbing, and electricity in his recommendations.

The need for the improvements the Italians and Americans provide is obvious. The Organized Crime Unit (OCU) is the self-proclaimed, main intelligence office in Nasiriyah. According to Lt. Muntasir of the unit, “We arrest a lot of terrorists who attack our province. Some come from other districts to make suicide attacks or explosions.”

“We need to refurbish our office to make it good and suitable for our work because we perform a very important service,” said Muntasir. Most of the citizens want to improve the security in their town – especially in this province.”

The U.S.-Italian relationship provides substantial benefits to the people of Nasiriyah to include a safer environment for the citizens; improved methods, equipment, security, and working conditions for the police, and additional employment for local Iraqi construction workers. The relationship also allows both the U.S. and Italian participants to forge strong friendships and to reflect upon their respective country’s contributions.

“My professional interaction with the Italians has made me aware of the interaction the Italian government has with the Iraqi people,” said Bennett. “Partnering with the Italians has given me a better understanding of the Iraqi police, thereby making me better prepared to fulfill my mission.”

Bennett thinks the Italians’ presence shows their desire to be part of the reconstruction of Iraq. “The Italians bring a sincerity that is not always seen. I believe that sincerity forces us to raise our standards and better fulfill our mission,” he said.

While Pugliese was generous in his praise of Bennett and the Corps of Engineers, he had a specific message for his fellow Italians.

“I would like them [the citizens of Italy] to know that this is a demonstration that we work with our hearts,” said Pugliese. “Those in Italy who demonstrate against our involvement are a minority and they don’t have exact information of what we are doing.”

“We are not at war,” said the Italian major. “There was no declaration of war. This is a peacekeeping mission.”

Terrorists and insurgents may disagree with Pugliese and continue to wage their war against democracy and stability. However, due to the improvements created through synergistic, multinational efforts, the terrorists’ fight will be more difficult.

Denise Calabria, GRS



The view from within the Carabinieri security convoy. (Photo by Denise Calabria)

Female-owned businesses anxious to participate in Iraq's reconstruction

The Iraq Project and Contracting Office's Water Sector and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Gulf Region Division (GRD) held the third in a series of women-owned business conferences focused on increasing Iraqi women's knowledge about the bid proposal process for construction and construction-related contracts in Iraq.

This third conference, held in Kirkuk Feb. 12, was part of an initiative aimed at holding conferences in Iraq's three geographical regions – North, Central and South. Fifty-eight women attended the first conference held in Baghdad Nov. 29. A second conference, attended by 23 women, was held in Basrah Jan. 18. Twenty-six women attended the conference in Kirkuk last month.

Following the first conference in Baghdad, Shirley Wilson, director of GRD's contracting office, said, "Women everywhere face the same general obstacles as (Iraqi women). There are no set asides for the program, and we can't guarantee them a contract, but we can help them understand the process."

"Women in Iraq are not used to competing against men for contracts," explained Eileen Padberg, of the Project and Contracting Office's Water Sector Women's Initiatives. Padberg helped start the initiative and planned and attended all the conferences.

"I think that the most important thing about the conferences is that included in our water sector contract is a requirement to involve the Iraqi women in the reconstruction process, which is what I was hired to do," Padberg said.

The women's initiative has proved a great network builder. "Because of this program, Iraqi women-owned businesses are now included on our mailing lists whenever a proposal for work is developed," Padberg explained. "My associate and I have developed quite an extensive list of women-owned businesses and that list continues to grow through the valuable network that we have been able to develop since last year."

Padberg said she realized this was an important initiative when there was a push to start awarding smaller contracts and hire more Iraqis.

Because of the higher capital needs required for some of the multimillion dollar construction projects, the conferences have focused on contracts for projects that are under \$1 million.

Darralyn Williams, deputy director of GRD's contracting office, who attended the conference in Kirkuk, said she was

extremely touched by one of the attendee's personal stories. "She said that she had always been working behind a much larger, male dominated company and that until the Coalition came into Iraq, she never thought she would have the opportunity to bid on a job herself with her own company," Williams recalled.

To qualify as a woman-owned business at least 51 percent of the company must be owned by one or more women; or, in the case of any publicly owned business, at least 51 percent of the stock. In addition to ownership, the management and daily business operations have to be controlled by one or more women too.

"Our seminars for the women-owned businesses provide an atmosphere where the women can learn directly from the contracting officers what they need to do to qualify for some of these contracts," Padberg said. "It is part of our ongoing effort to incorporate women into the reconstruction of Iraq."

Contracting officers from GRD have participated in all three conferences, acting as trainers. During the conferences, the women are shown where to find information about the projects being contracted, how to access and complete the paperwork, and how to financially qualify for the contracts.

The seminar's material was presented concisely and proved very informative for the attendees, according to Donna Street, area engineer for the Corps of Engineers' Kirkuk Area Office. "The conference in Kirkuk went very well," she said. "The class focused primarily on the process of putting together proposals and how to be successful once awarded."

Many of the attendees expressed an interest in trying to get contracts, but Street also noticed they had an interest in just improving the overall training opportunities for women.

Padberg continues to look for other ways to help the women of Iraq get a stake in the economy by providing equal opportunities in the job market. "This is such an important mission," she said.

Padberg believes that the inclusion of Iraqi women into the country's economy is critical to democracy. "Unless we can help provide Iraqi women a stake in the economy, democracy will fail. It is our responsibility to provide the women of Iraq with at least a level playing field."

Three more women-owned business conferences are planned for Baghdad, Diwaynah and Basrah in the coming months.

Nicole Dalrymple

Watermark: Twenty-six women attended a women-owned business conference in Kirkuk Feb. 12 that was sponsored by the Iraq Project and Contracting Office's Water Sector and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Gulf Region Division. The conference is part of an ongoing initiative that is focused on increasing Iraqi women's knowledge about the bid proposal process for construction and construction-related contracts in Iraq. Eileen Padberg, director of women's initiatives for PCO's Water Sector, believes that the inclusion of Iraqi women into the country's economy is critical to democracy. "Unless we can help provide Iraqi women a stake in the economy, democracy will fail."

(Photo by Nicole Dalrymple)

An evening in the ICU: Corps employee witnesses true heroes upfront

The ongoing War on Terrorism in Iraq is a very different war from the one Frank Scopa fought 37 years ago. From 1968 to 1969 Scopa served as a U.S. Marine Corps combat engineer in the Vietnam War, a war that shaped a generation. Fast forward to 2005 where Scopa now finds himself participating in another war, but this time he's a non-combatant.

Prior to his voluntary nine-month deployment to Iraq, Scopa was working as a construction project engineer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Walla Walla District. Scopa has been working for the Corps eighteen years. In Iraq, he is serving as the resident engineer in the Corp's Mosul Resident Office.

In the early morning hours of Jan. 4, Scopa arrived at Forward Operating Base Diamondback's gym for his usual 30 minute stationary bike workout. Within hours he would be admitted into the hospital's intensive care unit and personally witness the unfolding of a tragic story full of selfless service, duty and honor.

The unfolding events were much like a jigsaw puzzle; each new patient brought into the ICU was a missing piece. The picture was not a pretty one either. One Soldier was dead, another injured; a four-year-old boy was injured, his mother killed and his father injured; and two insurgents were injured.

About eleven minutes into his morning workout, Scopa began to notice some chest discomfort and about four minutes later he was having difficulty breathing. This was one of those times he did something smart, Scopa said. He stopped working out and sat down to rest. About thirty minutes later he was feeling better and headed back to the office. After telling his co-workers what had happened, Scopa was told he should go get his blood pressure checked.

Just before lunch, Scopa went to the hospital for screening and results showed that his blood pressure was extremely high. Medical personnel decided to admit him to the intensive care unit for monitoring. He spent the next nine hours in the ICU, and Scopa confesses he was a bit annoyed by the unplanned hospital stay.

Scopa recalled that for the first four hours he was the only patient and certainly didn't lack for attention. "When I tried to use the facilities, I was escorted by people who must have been extremely bored," he joked. "I was not allowed to stand up out of the bed without at least one nurse or hospital medic on hand to help me balance."

While the attention was a bit flattering, Scopa said by this time his blood pressure had returned to a normal range and he asked to be released. Hospital staffers said they didn't want to risk him having a heart attack and requested that he stay for observation. He was told to go lie down and not get up until he was told.

"These folks were driving me crazy," Scopa said good-naturedly. "I've learned during this deployment that it's best to just do what your told so I accepted the fact that I'd be spending the night in the ICU."

Shortly after resigning to his current situation, the ICU became very busy. A four-year-old boy, whose family had unknowingly driven into the middle of an insurgent-led ambush, was brought in for treatment, Scopa recalled. His mother had been killed and his father was in emergency surgery. Hospital staffers stayed close by to comfort the young boy and manage his pain until surgeons were able to operate on his hip and repair the damage, Scopa said.

Another patient was soon brought into the ICU. At least three surgeons were attending to the patient who was unconscious and had several tubes coming out of his body, including two in his chest. Scopa observed that the man had at least two gunshot wounds, one to the chest and one to the shoulder.

"The doctors, nurses and medics were working on this guy as if the future of the human race depended on his survival," Scopa remembers

Shortly after, a second patient was brought into the ICU. "He was in much worse shape," Scopa remembers. "He was on a respirator and several doctors, nurses and medics were working on him." Just a few feet from the patient, Scopa watched the skillful reactions of the medical staff as they checked vitals and measured fluid quantities. "I was taking all this in when I noticed that both patients were handcuffed to their bed rails. I sat up, wanting to look closer, and noticed 'AIF' written in black marker on their foreheads. AIF stands for Anti-Iraq Forces."

It was at this moment that the puzzle pieces began to come together. Scopa realized that the ICU's two newest patients were wounded in an ambush they had staged against U.S. Forces earlier that day. The final puzzle pieces came into place when he asked a nurse what had happened. She told him that two American Soldiers had been injured in the ambush, one was dead and the other was in surgery.

Scopa was quickly overwhelmed by the thought that these two men, who were getting medical treatment, were responsible for the injury of a small child, the death of his mother, the injury of his father, the death of an American Soldier and the injury of another. "I wondered what was accomplished by the attack," Scopa said. "The insurgents showed that they are willing to kill anyone that enters their kill zone. It was at this time I told the nurse I had to get out of the ICU."

The medical staff offered Scopa a bed someplace else besides the ICU but he quickly informed them that he was ready to leave – now. He began to get dressed and one of the nurses, noticing his extreme agitation, told the doctor that it would be best to let Scopa leave.

"I was overwhelmed by the thought that another American was dead, one was injured, and that a small child was wounded, his family destroyed," Scopa said. "I found myself in that ICU thinking how easy it would be to unplug [the insurgent's] respirator, and there were Americans in the ICU exercising a basic human trait that I had put on hold – they believed in the sanctity of human life."

"It was very hard for me to accept that for them it didn't matter whose life they were trying to save. It was a life. I also thought of the other Americans caught in the ambush who had called in medical support for the two wounded insurgents, all the while knowing that an American had died at their hands."

The tremendous mental balance demonstrated by these American troops impressed Scopa greatly. "This could have easily been a time when they could have been devoid of human emotions and traits. Instead, they allowed the insurgents to receive medical treatment and live." Scopa questioned whether he could have reacted the same way.

At about 9:30 p.m. Scopa left the hospital, but could think of little else but the afternoon's events. "Like the Americans who fought and died in World War II, these Soldiers, Marines, Airmen and Sailors are the moral equivalent of the WWII vets," Scopa said. "They are here to improve the lives of the Iraqi people. Not to conquer, subjugate or violate their God-given rights. I think those were the same moral purposes of WWII."

Despite how upsetting the experience was, Scopa is grateful he saw the actions of these selfless service members. "I am very proud of what I saw here. The actions of these Americans can only enhance the reputation of the United States military, as one that is a respecter of life. I think we all need to be proud of their actions. They represent the very best of us all."

Nicole Dalrymple

Standing room only- *Corps commander spreads good news in Iraq*

Lt. Col. Norm Grady, who served with the Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq, gave a standing-room only presentation Jan. 12 to students and faculty of Northwestern University's McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science in Evanston, Ill.

"The voluntary attendance speaks for itself," said Dr. Hamlin Jennings, the Chairman of the McCormick Schools' Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. "He was dynamic."

"This is probably the biggest attendance I've ever seen for a lecture," said Terry Holman, a doctoral student in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering who worked with Army Public Affairs to organize the lecture.

"And a lot of older professors didn't fall asleep, even though this was a late afternoon presentation – that's truly the measure of a successful lecture," he added.

Grady served as the deputy commander and deputy district engineer for the Gulf Region – Southern District of the Corps of Engineers. His district was responsible for a \$1.3 billion construction project over the southern third of the country. He currently serves as the deputy commander and deputy district engineer for the USACE - Chicago District.

He spoke about the reconstruction efforts in Iraq, focusing on the huge size of the USACE mission in Iraq, the progress that has been made there and the high quality of the people he worked with. "Most folks just haven't seen this stuff," said Grady.

"Most people here would say that they had no idea that this was going on in Iraq, we don't hear much about this," said Holman.

Cecelia Rechea, another doctoral student with the department, attended the lecture because she was "very curious about what is going on in Iraq." "I feel like we don't always hear everything on the news, only the bad news," she said.

The progress in Iraq demonstrated in Grady's presentation was "surprising," said Jennings. "I was heartened by his story and to see the progress being made."

"Grady presented a very good picture of the Army engineers," said Sgt. 1st Class John Ramirez, the Army recruiter for the Northwestern campus. "Things like this lecture help present a positive image of the military," especially given that during his three years recruiting on this campus, he has observed that Northwestern is generally a "liberal" campus that is "not always pro-military."

Jennings also complimented Grady's discussion and recognition that this is a

"multi-cultural world. It seems that the military understands this," he said.

Grady said that an Iraqi-American student in the audience and her husband took the time to thank him for discussing the Iraqi people's contribution to the reconstruction efforts. Grady noted in his presentation that USACE has hired Iraqi civilians as U.S. government employees to support the reconstruction efforts.

Jennings would like to "explore opportunities" to bring Grady back to the McCormick School, which ranks among the top 20 engineering schools nationwide, according to U.S. News and World Report.

Jennings said he thinks Grady's experiences could help motivate undergraduate students.

"This was definitely time well spent, and I would not have trouble doing it again," said Grady. "What more could you ask? People were sitting in the aisles."

Kathryn Pardo,
Army Public Affairs—Midwest

If you would like to get more involved in telling the Army story, please visit www.army.mil/otf to find out more about Operation Tribute to Freedom or contact US Army Public Affairs - Midwest at 312.596.4420 or OTF-Midwest@hqda.army.mil



Lt. Col. Norm Grady gives a presentation to students and faculty at Northwestern University about engineering projects in Iraq. (Photo by Kathryn Pardo)



Panhorst

HOMETOWN FEATURE: Panhorst returns from Iraq

Iraqi men and women gained a foothold on preparing a better life for themselves because of the Corps' mission in Iraq. Savannah District's Capt. John W. Panhorst played a part in developing the opportunities for Iraqis to find work and learn new job skills while deployed in Iraq.

"The average Iraqi citizen that I talked to wants the same things we all want. They want to be able to provide for their family, shop for groceries without being accosted. They want to be able to earn an honest living, celebrate free religion, and not be told what to do," said Panhorst, the operations officer, Area Office, Gulf Region North Division from May 22 to Nov. 11, 2004.

The U.S. Army and Iraqi security forces strive to provide safety so that the nation's workers can find work and provide for their families.

"We are having a stabilizing effect on Iraq. With American assistance, the Iraqis are able to focus on making life better. There is a lot of construction going on, not just projects that the Corps is doing, we saw a lot of new homes and other pro-

jects going on in different local communities. The contractors we were working with wanted the work and the opportunity for work," Panhorst said.

Because much of the Iraqi workforce was unskilled in construction, the Corps had to teach them every aspect of the job, just so the project could meet modern standards.

"They were basically unskilled labor building cinder block walls. They would get the blocks set-up and then smear a layer of mud or mortar on them, take a smoke break, then come back and stack more blocks on. In 118 degree heat that mortar doesn't stay wet very long, so it has already hardened," said Panhorst.

Realizing that the workforce had no idea how to build a cinder block wall, the Army decided to educate the workforce and teach them the proper skills.

"We had to build a three and a half kilometer portion of the perimeter wall around the Iraqi Army base. It was made from cinder block, so we had to bring the Iraqi workforce into a classroom and teach them from the beginning how it should be done," he said. "We would go out and work with the Iraqi workforce on a training wall, then have the Iraqi quality control representatives look at it and tell what was good and what needed to be done over again," he said. With patience the Americans managed to teach the Iraqis to lay bricks properly.

The Iraqis had their own way for mixing concrete mortar.

"They mixed their mortar with their feet! They would stir some cement and whatever sand they could find and then they would literally mix it up with their feet," said Panhorst.

Panhorst found that many things are changing in Iraq since the Corps has been there; many old traditions were beginning to change.

"You could see a few women working along with the men. The education and opportunities we provided in the way of work and job skills gave the Iraqi laborers more choices than pan-handling, sitting around doing nothing, or picking up arms and shooting at you," Panhorst said.

Panhorst can see how his job was part of a larger picture of the reconstruction of Iraq.

"I served in two different locations while I was over there. I was the Operations Officer for each area office in the Gulf Region North District. We expanded to electrical projects, new Iraqi army bases, hospitals and schools, border forts, and a couple of landfills," he said.

"We rely on air transport since there are no ports in the middle of the country. A lot of things are closely tied to one another. There were a lot of growing pains. It was like taking a lot of different picture puzzles and throwing them in the floor and trying to make them fit into one large scene," he said.

When asked if he would go back.

"I believe in the mission, I believe in the work, and I would go back in a few years," Panhorst said. "It was tough, it's tough for everyone. I was able to take lots of pictures to show the family that I was OK and to remind them what Daddy looks like," he said. "Corps employees are very fortunate to have telephone and e-mail communications available to keep in touch with the family," said Panhorst.

The tough conditions seemed a bit less tough on Panhorst when he returned, knowing that the conditions for the Iraqis were a little better because of his work.

Jim Cunningham, Savannah District

(Photo courtesy of John Panhorst)

Afghanistan Engineering District*

The other front line in the Corps' global war on terrorism

Surrounded by greening hills of a mid-March rain, many Afghans rise at dawn from their old bombed-out Russian buildings, dilapidated earthen structures or worn and weathered tents, bewildered to see how their city has grown.

The snow melts away in Kabul, and in a matter of years, the population in Kabul has increased in teeming numbers. It has become the fastest growing city in the world.

Most people, regardless of where they live, have no electricity, running water, or sewer systems.

And the sad truth is, while parts of the world struggle with reconstruction, Afghanistan has been a place long forgotten by time and never developed to a point where it has been able to sustain a healthy and stable society.

Afghanistan, in the latest United Nations report, is still the fifth least developed and poorest country in the world where existing infrastructure is either badly degraded or nonexistent. Only 6 percent of country has any electricity at all and there are even less wastewater treatment facilities.

And while the United Nations, United States and other foreign organization continue to work on capacity building, in other words to help build roads, schools, hospitals and study power and water solutions, a large part of that success is dependent on first ensuring the security and stability of the nation.

And that's where the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Afghanistan Engineer District - AED - as well as many other supporting government organizations and agencies are concentrating their efforts.

While the Corps does participate in capacity building projects and has a large role in military construction for U.S. and Coalition Forces, its largest program is helping to reform the security sector in Afghanistan by building all of the newly formed Afghan National Army - ANA - facilities from the ground up. AED is also building facilities for the Afghan police.

The overall goal, at this time, is to provide facilities for 70,000 Afghan soldiers throughout the country.

To date, two ANA bases are in their final stages of construction with six others in progress and more planned in the near future. These projects alone will support more than 35,000 active duty soldiers and feature force protection, barracks, dining facilities, motor pools, administration buildings, power plants, maintenance facilities, water and wastewater treatment plants.

Working on an aggressive schedule, most installations are scheduled to be completed within nine months from start to finish.

In addition to the installations, AED is also constructing an ANA hospital, training facilities and a military academy which has modeled its program after the United States' prestigious West Point military academy.

The police program currently encompasses the construction and refurbishment of 18 facilities with more than \$140 million of construction planned in the future as the program grows. Planning for substantial construction continues for border crossing points and border, provincial and highway police.

The Corps is committed to providing jobs for as many Afghans as possible. Through our contractors, Afghans represent a large majority of the total workforce.

The Afghan people are good at stone and masonry work, but limited in other craftwork. At the national army level, there is a Corps representative that serves as a mentor for installation management and is working with Afghans on programming and planning projects for the future.

Ideally, Afghans will be able to maintain the facilities they have and continue to upgrade and build new facilities in the future, which will directly improve the stability and success of Afghanistan.

"The good news is, I'm happy to be able to report that we're winning this war and that conditions in Afghanistan are getting better," said AED Commander and District Engineer, Col. John B. Dowd, in a recent speech.

Maria Or, AED Public Affairs

* While not aligned under the Gulf Region Division, AED is another front on the Corps' contribution to fight the global war on terrorism.



New cadets train in the snow at the Afghan National Army Military Academy in Kabul. The facilities are near completion and are scheduled to be finished this summer. (AED photo by Maria Or)

Hail and Farewell

Hailing:

Angelita Alcazar, Budget Analyst GRN, Europe District
 James Allen, Construction Rep GRN, Walla Walla District
 Maj. Leigh Bandy, Contracting Officer GRN, St. Paul District
 Trajn Boughan, Project Manager GRN, Non-Corps
 Joe Branham, IT Manager GRN, Retired USACE
 Kenneth Carleton, Contracting Officer GRN, Fort Worth District
 Michael Carney, Construction Rep GRN, Non-Corps
 Andrew Debraie, Construction Rep GRN, Portland District
 Clifford Dominey, Project Engineer GRN, Galveston District
 Joselito Domingo, Project Engineer GRN, Non-Corps
 Jeremy Draggoo, Construction Rep GRN, Walla Walla District
 Maj. Luis Fuentes-Rivera, Operations Officer GRN, Southwestern Division
 Richalie Griffith, Construction Rep GRN, New England District
 Capt. Jeffrey Hall, Operations Officer GRN, Los Angeles District
 Russell Johnson, Project Manager GRN, Portland District
 John Lozano, Construction Rep GRN, Non-Corps
 Tami Lupi, Logistics Specialist GRN, Portland District
 Steve Marchand, Facilities Manager GRN, Seattle District
 Louis (Web) Mason, Construction Rep GRN, ERDC
 Alan Miller, Project Manager GRN, Savannah District
 Pradip Patel, Project Manager GRN, Non-Corps
 James (JW) Purcell, Contracting Specialist GRN, Nashville District
 Capt. David Revill, Operations Officer GRN, Other

Walter Scott, Project Engineer GRN, New York District
 Kent Smith, Project Engineer GRN, Chicago District
 Robert Tilson, IT Specialist GRN, Other
 Maureen Trainor, Budget Analyst/Admin Assistant GRN, Jacksonville District
 Kenneth Wertz, Construction Rep GRN, Kansas City District



Capt. Sean Connelly
 Operations Officer GRN
 Returning to:
 TAC



Dave Bequeaith
 Project Manager GRN
 Returning to:
 Rock Island District



Richard Ryan
 Resident Engineer GRN
 Returning to:
 Jacksonville District



Dwayne Roeder
 Construction Rep. GRN
 Returning to:
 Portland District



Rick Cheever
 Construction Rep. GRN
 Returning to:
 Kansas City District



Brian Harper
 Deputy for Support GRN
 Returning to:
 Alaska District



Eric Blechinger
 Chief of E&C GRN
 Returning to:
 Kansas City District



Theresa Blondin
 Logistics Specialist GRN
 Returning to:
 Seattle District



Robert Kreienheder
 Resident Engineer GRN
 Returning to:
 Europe District



Su-Chen Chen
 Resident Engineer GRN
 Returning to:
 Seattle District



Mike George
 Project Manager GRN
 Returning to:
 Omaha District



Terrance Johnson
 Area Engineer GRN
 Returning to:
 Non-Corps



Jack Sheldon
 Deputy for Support GRN
 Returning to:
 Walla Walla District



Jonathan Petry
 Project Engineer GRN
 Returning to:
 Kansas City District



Mike Ott
 GIS Specialist GRN
 Returning to:
 Portland District



Mary Sue Morgan
 Project Engineer GRN
 Returning to:
 Seattle District



Karen Jordan
 Admin. Asst. GRN
 Returning to:
 Portland District



Steve Brockhouse
 Construction Rep. GRN
 Returning to:
 Omaha District



Jim Conroy
 Area Engineer GRN
 Returning to:
 Omaha District



Patrick Haas
 Chief, Construction GRS
 Returning to:
 Huntsville Center



Nicholas Peschang
 Construction Rep. GRS
 Returning to:
 Louisville District



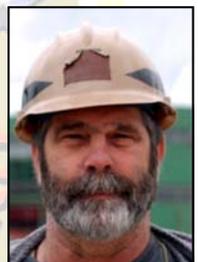
Mary Priddy
 Admin. Assist. GRS
 Returning to:
 Louisville District



Don Boley
 Construction Rep. GRS
 Returning to:
 Louisville District



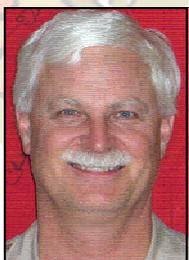
Kevin Blair
 Resident Engineer GRN
 Returning to:
 Kansas City District



Dale Strbal
 Construction Rep. GRN
 Returning to:
 Omaha District



Rod Stauton
 Construction Rep. GRN
 Returning to:
 Little Rock District



Wayne Elliot
 Project Engineer GRN
 Returning to:
 Southwestern Division



Jim Weaver
 Construction Rep. GRN
 Returning to:
 Walla Walla District



Nicole Dalrymple
 PAO GRN
 Returning to:
 St. Louis District



Linda Carter
 Construction Rep. GRN
 Returning to:
 Walla Walla District



Cory Parker
 MAO, LOGCAP GRN
 Returning to:
 Walla Walla District



Melissa Head
 GRC Real Estate/Council
 Returning to:
 Omaha District